

SALMON ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON METHODOLOGY REVIEW PROCESS
AND PRELIMINARY TOPIC SELECTION FOR 2007

Lower Columbia River Tule Chinook

The Salmon Advisory Subpanel (SAS) notes that the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) Section 3.3, subsection 3.3.1 entitled “Endangered Species Act Listings” states, “In so far as is practical...NMFS will endeavor to provide opportunity for Council and peer review of any proposed consultation standards, or the objectives of recovery plans, well prior to their implementation.”

In our view, this includes the reduction in the exploitation rate on Lower Columbia Tule Fall Chinook from 49% to 42% and the addition of the East Fork Lewis and Grays River populations to the bank of indicator stocks. We do not believe this review has been accomplished per our FMP and we are very disappointed. This has been a problem in the past.

The implications of this decision as elaborated in the guidance letter of March 1, 2007 by NMFS for Coastal and Lower Columbia economies are dramatic to put it mildly. Given the gravity of this situation we think these adjustments should have been vetted by the wider scientific and management community.

We would opine that the greatest confidence in the Council’s scientific process is when it is peer-reviewed before it is used.

Fall Fishery Impacts

Each year, the Council sets salmon seasons for the current calendar year. This task must be accomplished based on projections that are available during the spring of each year. However, the Klamath Ocean Harvest Model (KOHM) does not estimate impacts to future broods in fisheries occurring in the fall time frame, September to November of the current year. Impacts from fisheries occurring in that period, the “credit card” debt, are accounted for in the analysis conducted the following spring.

Fall fisheries are historic and valuable fisheries; however without an estimate of the fish likely to be caught in the credit card fishery, (the magnitude of “credit card” debt) the ability to fish the following year can be placed at risk. The magnitude of the uncertainty is not known until after the fact, and the size of the debt can range from insignificant in years of plenty, to unacceptable in years of scarcity.

The SAS requests that the Salmon Technical Team (STT) develop some type of credit card catch projection methodology to provide us with some guidance regarding the size of the debt and the risks that we are exposing next year’s fishery to.

We recognize that the availability of quality data may not support as detailed a projection as is currently used; however the absence of any kind of credit card projection of Klamath catch overly complicates the creation of our season structure. We strongly urge that the STT address this issue and develop a modeling methodology that will allow us to assess, and thereby better manage, the following year’s fishery.